

Missouri Department of Natural Resources OPERATOR CERTIFICATION SECTION



WATER & WASTEWATER DIGEST

Winter 2021

Drinking Water Fee Rates to Change Jan. 1, 2022

On Jan. 1, 2022, several amendments to state regulation 10 CSR 60-16 Drinking Water Fees will become effective that will change the fee rates applicable to public water systems, customers of public water systems, laboratories and certified drinking water operators. These rule amendments will be published in the Code of State Regulations on Nov. 30, 2021, but below is the key information you need to be aware of now to be prepared for these changes when they take effect.

Primacy Fees

Community public drinking water systems collect the primacy fee from their customers and remit the fees to the state. The primacy fee rates per customer service connection for unmetered customers and customers with meters not greater than one inch in size will change from the current structure to the following:

Number of Connections	Fees
1 to 10 connections	\$50*
11 to 10,000 connections	\$5.28 per connection
10,001 to 50,000 connections	\$4.80 per connection
50,001 to 100,000 connections	\$4.20 per connection
More than 100,000 connections	\$3.48 per connection

*\$50 minimum fee assessed for systems with less than 10 connections.

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The primacy fee rates per customer service connection for customers with meters greater than one inch in size will change from the current structure to the following:

Meter Size	Fees
Greater than one inch, but less than or equal to two inches	\$21
Greater than two inches, but less than or equal to four inches	\$102
Greater than four inches	\$198

With this change to take effect soon, public water systems should consider several actions now so they collect the appropriate fee amounts from their customers including:

1. **Do you need to change your collection schedule?** Most systems are on an annual schedule for Primacy Fee collections. If there is a need for your system to change this schedule, you need to notify the department in writing by Jan. 1, 2022. A change in the frequency of collection to a monthly or quarterly schedule will also result in a change in your submittal frequency to quarterly as well. Please coordinate with the department as soon as possible if you are planning on making a collection schedule change.
2. **Do you need to make changes to your billing software?** If you need to make changes to your billing software to accommodate the new fee rates or a new frequency, you may need to start the planning for those changes now to guarantee you are ready to collect the appropriate fee from your customers when the time comes to collect the revised amounts.
3. **Determining the appropriate amount to charge for the first year which will be a prorated amount.** One important consideration related to the Primacy Fee collection for the first year of implementation is that the current annual fee period established in the rule is Sept. 1 through Aug. 31. The new fees become effective midway through this time frame. Therefore, when assessing the annual fee for the period of Sept. 1, 2021, through Aug. 31, 2022, you will need to charge the appropriate prorated amount. You can find this amount in the fourth column of the following table. This table uses the current fee amount for the first four months of the annual period and the revised fee amount for the remaining eight months. For subsequent annual collection periods, the water system should collect the full amount located in the third column of the table.

Note: this table is for systems collecting on an annual schedule. If you are collecting on a schedule other than annual, contact the department if you need information on the prorated amounts to collect for the first collection period that crosses the Jan. 1 effective date.

Primacy Fee Revision Table for Systems on an Annual Collection Schedule

Number of Connections with Unmetered or Meter Size ≤ 1"	Current Fee Amount	Revised Fee Amount	Fees
1 to 10	\$3.24	\$50.00*	\$50.00*
11 to 1,000	\$3.24	\$5.28	\$4.60
1,001 to 4,000	\$3.00	\$5.28	\$4.52
4,001 to 7,000	\$2.76	\$5.28	\$4.44
7,001 to 10,000	\$2.40	\$5.28	\$4.32
10,001 to 20,000	\$2.16	\$4.80	\$3.92
20,001 to 35,000	\$1.92	\$4.80	\$3.84
35,001 to 50,000	\$1.56	\$4.80	\$3.72
50,001 to 100,000	\$1.32	\$4.20	\$3.24
>100,000	\$1.08	\$3.48	\$2.68

Meter Size

Meter Size	Current Fee Amount	Revised Fee Amount	Fees
>1" ≤ 2"	\$7.44	\$21.00	\$16.48
>2" ≤ 4"	\$41.16	\$102.00	\$81.72
>4"	\$82.44	\$198.00	\$159.48

*For systems with 10 connections or less, the department will assess their fee at the minimum amount for the system and not per connection. The minimum fee will not be prorated.

4. **Provide Customer Notification.** Finally, you should consider providing a notice to your customers regarding this rate increase and any potential change to your collection schedule to minimize any surprises when your customers receive their first billing.

Laboratory Services and Program Administration Fees

The Laboratory Services and Program Administration Fee is a fee collected by the department from certain Public Water Systems to help offset the cost of providing laboratory services. For systems that pay this fee, the fee structure will change to the following:

System Type	Number of Connections	Fees
Transient	Any	\$150
Groundwater*	7,599 or less	\$300
Groundwater*	7,600 or more	\$500
Surface Water*	Any	\$750

*Except transient non-community water systems.

The department will send invoices to systems for these new amounts starting in Jan. 2022, with payment due by Feb. 28, 2022.

Laboratory Certification Fee

The department certifies laboratories that perform analysis of drinking water samples for compliance purposes. With this change to the fee structure, the department will begin collecting new fees from laboratories, not operated by political subdivisions of the state, that seek certification to analyze drinking water compliance samples for microbiological parameters. New fee rates are \$500 for a three-year certification fee and \$500 for an audit fee for in-state laboratories. These fees, if applicable, will be due at the time of initial or renewal application.

Operator Certification

New operator certification fees will go into effect for drinking water distribution and treatment exams, renewals and reciprocity applications. These changes are for drinking water fees only. The department's fees for wastewater treatment and concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFO) certification will not change. The fee changes are as follows:

- Exam Fees: The fee will increase from a \$45 exam fee and \$20 retake fee to \$50 per exam.
- Renewal Fees: The fee will increase from \$45 to \$60.
- Late Fees for Renewals: Drinking water treatment and distribution operators may renew an expired certificate during the two months following the expiration date of the certificate with late fees applying during this period. These fees will increase from \$10 per month to \$37.50 per month for a maximum of \$75.
- Reciprocity: The fee will increase from \$65 to \$75.

Operators who have a certificate that expires in Jan. 2022, or later will be required to pay the new fee to renew their certificate. The department will mail out renewal notices in November for certificates that expire Jan. 31, 2022, and the notices will reflect the new fees. For those individuals applying to take an examination scheduled after Jan. 1, 2022, the new fee rates will apply.

Additional Information

If you are interested in additional information about the process followed by the department to change the fee structure, the [department's Fee Stakeholder webpage](#) is a great resource.

If you have questions about any of the fee changes addressed in this article, you may contact the Water Protection Program's Fiscal Management Section at P.O. Box 176, Jefferson City, MO 65102, by phone at 573-751-6723, or via email at wppfees@dnr.mo.gov.

Automated Phone Calls Help Improve Compliance

The Department of Natural Resources has a new tool to help notify drinking water and wastewater owners, operators and other system personnel of overdue items, upcoming deadlines and other reminders. It is an automated phone dialer and with its use, the department has already seen a positive effect on compliance.

For drinking water systems, the department currently uses the auto dialer for a wide array of subjects and reminders. In most cases, the auto dialer is a preventative tool that notifies systems of upcoming deadlines.

Drinking water systems may receive phone calls for the following activities:

- Reminders about annual sampling events, like lead and copper.
- Reminders about the annual Consumer Confidence Report.
- Reminders about drinking water laboratory services fees.
- Reminders about EPA requirements, like the America's Water Infrastructure Act Emergency Response Plans for systems with populations above 3,300.
- Information about State Health Lab closures.

For wastewater treatment and stormwater facilities, the department primarily uses the auto dialer for notification of overdue Discharge Monitoring Reports (DMRs) at permitted facilities. These auto-generated notifications occur once per month.

For certified operators, the department is making reminder phone calls to individuals who have not renewed their operator certificate(s). The department also mails a reminder postcard three months in advance of the certificate expiration date and a second notice one month prior to expiration date. If the certificate is not renewed, the department uses the auto dialer to make phone calls during the 60-day grace period after the certificate expires.

How can You Update Your Contact Information to Ensure You Receive Automated Reminders?

Drinking Water Systems: Please contact your local Regional Office or fill out the online [DNR Inventory Address Data Form](#).

Wastewater Treatment Facilities: Please contact your local Regional Office. For the latest Regional Office map and directory, visit [our website](#).

Operator Certification: View and update personal contact information online at the [Operator Certification Database](#).

Over \$65,000 Awarded for Abandoned Well Plugging

The department is committed to helping public water systems protect their drinking water at the source. In state fiscal year 2021, the department issued more than \$65,000 in awards to six public water systems to assist in plugging nine abandoned wells. Abandoned wells are a safety concern and can act as a conduit for contamination of groundwater aquifers. Examples of contaminant sources include: improperly managed waste, nonpoint source runoff, and leaking underground storage tanks. If a contaminant enters a drinking water aquifer, it can take years to remediate. Properly plugging abandoned wells reduces the likelihood of this occurring and helps public drinking water systems maintain their source water for future generations.

Interested systems should apply for abandoned well plugging grants in Nov. and Dec. of 2021. For more information about our source water protection efforts, please visit [the department's Source Water Protection webpage](#) or contact us at sourcewaterprotection@dnr.mo.gov.



This photo is an example of an abandoned well before plugging with the use of grant funds.

Chemical Sampling Kit Shipments to Change to FedEx

Effective Jan. 1, 2022, the department's Environmental Services Program (ESP) Laboratory will begin using FedEx for shipment of chemical sampling kits. This change will affect the return shipment options available to public water systems (PWS) who utilize the ESP Laboratory for analysis. The new return shipment options will include the following:

1. Health Department Courier (preferred return method for chemical samples)

This change will not affect your ability to use the Department of Health and Senior Services' courier service for returning your chemical samples. This option is still the department's preferred method of receiving sample shipments and is the current method used by most PWS to ship their monthly bacteriological samples to the Department of Health and Senior Services State Public Health Laboratory. All county health departments (and some hospitals and clinics) participate as courier locations, and PWS can use them to return most samples overnight to Jefferson City at no additional cost to the water system. A full listing of courier locations and contact information is available on [the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services website](#).

Please note that not all hospitals and clinics will accept chemical samples, so you may need to call ahead to verify before dropping off a shipment.

2. FedEx (backup return method for chemical samples)

If you are not able to utilize the courier service, each kit will also contain a FedEx return label and detailed instructions on how to use FedEx for returning sampling kits back to the ESP Laboratory for analysis. The instructions will provide information on how to find the nearest FedEx drop off location or how to schedule a ground pickup.

3. Hand-deliver or return sampling kit on your own

PWS always have the option to hand-deliver the kit directly to the ESP Laboratory at 2710 W Main St. in Jefferson City. If samples can be hand-delivered the same day as sample collection, the samples do not need to be pre-chilled. The PWS staff should place samples and frozen gel packs into the cooler/insulated box and deliver them to the rear loading dock during normal business hours (8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.) Monday through Friday. The PWS must contact ESP laboratory's Sample Custodian (573-526-3333) prior to delivery. The person making the delivery must use the loading dock phone to notify the Sample Custodian upon arrival.

Benefits of this Change

With this change to FedEx, the department expects to save costs while increasing options for PWS to return their shipments. The department is currently charged for all call tags issued for return delivery, even if unused by the PWS. After this change, that will no longer be the case, and the department will only be charged if a PWS makes a shipment using the provided call tag.

In addition to the cost savings realized from this change, the department also believes this change will provide more flexibility for systems to return the package. With FedEx, PWS can schedule pickups online or by telephone. They can also choose to drop off packages at numerous locations around the state at places like Walgreens or Dollar General.

Save Time. Return chemical and bacteriological samples at the same time

Most chemical samples have a monitoring schedule that allows a PWS to hold a kit for one or two weeks before sample collection. Additionally, preservatives and hold times for most chemical samples allow the samples to be collected a couple of days before returning to the lab provided the PWS refrigerates the samples after collection until shipping them back to the lab with the frozen gel packs. With a little planning, you can return monthly bacteriological samples and chemical samples at the same time in their respective kits for analysis via the Health Department Courier. The department encourages operators to use the Health Department Courier when possible as this option supports overnight delivery to Jefferson City at the lowest available cost.

Radionuclide Samples

This change to FedEx does not apply to radionuclide sampling. The St. Louis County Health Department Laboratory analyzes all radionuclide compliance samples for Missouri systems. You will still need to continue to send samples to their lab for analysis via their issued UPS call tags.

For More Information

If you have any questions, please contact the Public Drinking Water Branch's Monitoring Section at 573-751-1077 for more information.

Try Out Our New Website to Find Training and Exam Dates

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources has redesigned and reorganized its website to improve the customer experience and allow users to find the information they need easier and faster. The department continues to host its webpages at dnr.mo.gov.

Aside from a completely new look, users will notice the website content has been reorganized based on areas of focus, such as air, waste and recycling, water, energy, state parks and general topics. The department built the new website with mobile optimization in mind, allowing content to flow easily between desktop and mobile devices. Popular services, such as permitting, financial opportunities, public notices, monitoring and reporting, will be prominently displayed in a Popular Services menu.

The department's Operator Certification page features a new format for viewing upcoming training and allows operators to search for courses by date and location. To find the [Operator Certification page](#), select the Water tab from the department's main page to find a list of upcoming training and exam dates.

Check Your Training Hours

Did you know that certified operators can access their training information by visiting the department's website? Just visit the [Operator Certification Database](#) and log in using the last four digits of your social security number.

In addition to checking your training hours, you can also renew certificates online, as well as view and update contact information for your public drinking water system including the chief operator, sample collector and administrative contact.

For more information, contact the department's Operator Certification Section at 800-361-4827 or 573-751-1600.



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